Sympathy as a cause of Disease.

Mr. Isaac Hays
20 door above 12th
Chestnut
Nov. 24

On Sympathy as a cause of disease

Isaac Hays

admitted March 14th 1820

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There is an intimate connection existing between every part of our system, by which an action excited in one part, is communicated to another, and a perfect harmony thus established, among all the actions that take place in the animal oeconomy. This law, to which the terms association, sympathy, or consent of parts have been applied, early attracted the observation of Physicians. It was known even to Hypocrates, & Galen has treated particularly, of those diseases which arise from sympathy. In the writings of Van Helmont, Baglivi, Riga, Whytt, Hunter, Darwin, Barther, & Bichat, are to be found the most conclusive evidences of the existence of this law; indeed it appears at present, to be established, beyond the reach of cavil or dispute. Hoffman has likewise considered this subject with much attention, he has traced the sympathies that obtain ~~between the~~ between the stomach and different parts of the body with great success, & has shown the accumulation of noxious

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matters in the alimentary canal, to be the source of many diseases. The labours of these writers, were however more particularly directed to the investigation of the more intimate sympathies existing between the several organs of the body, & to the vain attempt of accounting for their operation, whilst its effects in the production of disease, if not wholly overlooked, certainly does not seem to have obtained the attention it deserves.

An acquaintance with the influence of sympathy in the production of diseases, is of the utmost importance to the physician, as it affords him the only means of arriving at a correct pathology, & of pursuing a rational and successful plan of cure. It lays open to his view the whole progress of disease, & shows him how a mere local affection gradually extends itself, till finally it embraces every part of the system: and all diseases, no matter how extensive may be their influence, even if every part of the system be involved

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volved, proceed from a local impression, conveyed to other parts, by sympathetic affinity. It enables him to distinguish a symptomatic from an idiopathic affection, to trace disease to its first lodgment, & to pursue his measures for its removal unawed by those phantoms of repulsion, & translation, which have so often paralyzed the efforts of the medical practitioner.

It has already been said, that even the affections which appear to us most complex in the number, the variety, & the dissimilarity of their symptoms, all originate in a disease of a single organ, extended to others, by means of the numerous sympathies of the affected organ, with the other organs of the body. Of the manner however ~~by~~ in which this connection takes place, we are entirely ignorant. It has been satisfactorily shown by Whytt, that it cannot be through the medium of the nerves, since some parts which receive filaments from the same nerve do not sympathize,

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while there exists between others, the nerves of which have no connection, the most manifest sympathy. Nor is the explanation which he has offered, more satisfactory. Indeed like heat, electricity, galvanism, magnatism, & gravitation, it is known only by its effects, & like these its nature or essence, will perhaps forever elude our grasp. But although we are ignorant of the nature, & mode of action of its causes, we must not cease to investigate its effects, for by carefully observing its operations which are every day presented to us in the phenomena of health and disease, we shall be able very accurately to ascertain the extent of its ~~operation~~ influence, as well as the laws by which it is governed, & thus be enabled to correct the operation of these laws, when they are called into action, in a manner inconsistent with health.

With a view to investigate this subject more particularly, I shall endevour to point out some of the morbid sympathies most fequently

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+ ~~Gregory~~.

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called into ~~into~~ action, involving parts not originally affected, & disguising disease with a mask, calculated to perplex, & mislead the practitioner.

Every part of the system is connected by sympathetic affinity, but there are certain parts as the Skin, brain, & digestive organs, upon which the causes of disease most frequently operate. Of these the digestive organs, being constantly subjected to the operation of such a variety of irritating matters, composed of the various articles of food, & drink, & the occasional vitiation of their own natural secretions, are observed to be that part of the system, where we meet most frequently with those primary irritations, which are productive of diseased appearances, & therefore deserves the most particular attention.

The Stomach is the most important organ in the animal oeconomy. The essential part of every animal, the existence & action of which is most independent of the concurrence of every other organ, & to which life seems to adhere with most

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force, it is also the only one which can be said to exist by itself. Even the Polypus, which forms the last link in the animal chain, & whose structure appears to be reduced to the utmost simplicity consistent with animal existence, possesses a digestive apparatus. It in fact consists only of a digestive tube, a mere animated pulp, shaped into an alimentary canal. So simple indeed is its structure, & so absolute & independent are the mutual relations of its parts, that it may be turned inside out, & even cut into pieces, and yet the only function it is capable of performing, (digestion,) goes on, & each piece becomes a perfect individual, organized, & living, like that to which it originaly belonged. In ascending the animal scale, we find the structure of this organ becoming more complicated, till we arrive at the more perfect animals, in whom it is exceedingly complex. But here, it still maintains its importance, for life has been supported even in them, destitute of almost every other organ. Some cold blooded animals

+ Gregory
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§ John Burns

live & move for several hours without brain, heart, or lungs. Redi asserts that a turtle will live for months without its head, indeed it is said by naturalists that they have been known to survive the extraction of the brain for half a year. It is well known that a frog will live for a couple of days after his head is cut off; & that he will jump about, & will even if we may credit the Abbe Spallanzani, return to the embraces of his mistress, if the decapitation has taken place during the payment of his addresses. In Phthisis Pulmonalis there is sometimes scarcely a vestige of lungs left: some persons have the power of suspending the action of the heart,[+] & it is sometimes suspended without the will[||]. In dropsy of the head, nothing has been found, but the membranes: some have lost a considerable part of the brain & recovered; Spindler & others report instances of people walking about with part of the cerebrum gangrenous, & this part of the brain has been entirely removed in birds & other animals without death being occasioned[§]. All the

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involuntary motions, & even the use of the limbs, have continued a day, or two, after the spinal marrow has been divided; the involuntary ones continue when the senses & brain are locked up in sleep, lethargy, & apoplexy, & in the suspended action of the heart & lungs in syncope. Fatuses have been born alive, without brain, spinal marrow, heart, lungs, or uterus. Dr Parry relates the case of a fœtus in which there was not the smallest vestige of a cerebrum or cerebellum, but which even twenty hours after birth, moved up its knees when the soles of its feet were tickled, sucked his fingers when introduced into its mouth & a few hours before, had passed urine & fæces, & swallowed food, & the same motions are recorded as having occurred in another example, in which the spinal marrow, & medulla oblongata, as well as the brain, were totaly wanting. On the contrary a blow, or the wind of a cannon ball over the stomach kills without leaving a mark. Grateful food, strong wine, or other spirituous liquors, no sooner touch the stomach of one ready to faint from emptiness, than they

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The stomach also appears to be the centre of sympathies, exercising the most extensive influence over the whole human frame, both of body & mind. And when we consider that a due action in this important organ, is essentially necessary to the support of the human frame, & that its derangements must of course affect the whole system, which depends upon it for immediate, & bounty support, it is not at all surprising that it should be the first link in the chain of most diseases. Why disorder of the alimentary canal should produce such a variety of diseases, causing Chorea in one person, Vertigo in a second, Convulsions in a third, Gout in a fourth &c, it is impossible to say. There however, seems to exist in the animal oeconomy, a peculiar predisposition, or idiosyncracy, "whereby a susceptibility is given to individuals of being subject to certain modes of disease, arising from the application of occasional causes, by which another person, not possessed of that peculiarity, would either be not

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affected at all, or else affected in a different manner". In what this peculiarity consists, we are unable to discover. But in every part even of the inanimate world, we find inexplicable difficulties: what wonder then, if, in the human body, a system so curious, so subtile & compounded, we should meet with many appearances which we cannot at all account for. "The further we push our enquiries into nature, the more shall we be convinced of our ignorance, & how small a portion is known ~~to us~~ of the works of the great creator".

In pursuing the following investigation I shall adopt the classification of diseases proposed by Dr Chapman, as the one best suited to my purpose, & as it is to the author of that system, more than to any other person, that we are indebted for the elucidation, & promulgation, of the pathological view of disease under consideration. I commence with diseases of the sensitive System.

No fact in pathology is more fully established, than that disorders of the digestive organs will affect the whole nervous system. Numerous & diversified

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are these affections which have been denominated nervous. I do not believe there is one, that disorder of these organs will not occasionally simulate. An abolition of the functions of the brain, or a state of excitation causing delirium, partial nervous inactivity, & insensibility, or the opposite state of irritation & pain, may all be induced by this cause. It has been proved by numerous dissections, that a general derangement of the nervous system producing apoplexy, & also partial effects of a similar nature causing hemiplegia, & paralysis, may take place, without any visible change of structure in the brain, & observation has most satisfactorily shown that disorder of the chylopoietic viscera always precedes, & accompanies these cases, & that the nervous symptoms may with the utmost plausibility, be referred to this disorder. Mr Abernethy has examined the bodies of six patients in whom disease most certainly began in the abdominal viscera, & was continued in them to the conclusion of their lives, nevertheless, they seemed to die rather of nervous disorder, than of disease

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the parts first affected. One of the patients, died affected with apoplectic symptoms, & five with hemiplegia. In all these cases the digestive organs exhibited diseased appearances, & in two of them no morbid appearance was observable in the brain. Dr Cheyne also dissected the brain of a woman who died of apoplexy, in which there was not the slightest mark of disease, & numerous references to similar dissections are to be met with, in the writings of Morgagni, Kirkland, Bursecius & others.

A train of symptoms similar to those of Hydrocephalus, also frequently arises from the brain morbidly sympathizing with the digestive organs, & indeed Hydrocephalus itself is often fairly, & incurably established, by the sympathy which the brain has with these organs. This opinion is supported by the authority of Dr Cheyne, Dr James Curry, Dr Willan, & Dr Hamilton. This last writer observes, that Hydrocephalus often steals slowly on the devoted victim with symptoms resembling those of incipient marasmus, whence he infers

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fers, it is not unreasonable to suppose, that marasmus which is clearly the result of a morbid state of the digestive organs may occasionly give rise to Hydrocephalus. Dr Chapman has been led to entertain the same view of the pathology of the case, from the well known association which, he observes, exists between all these parts, & by various considerations which may be deduced from the history of the disease, such as the that disorder observed in the chylopoietic viscera, sometimes for weeks before the appearance of Hydrocephalic symptoms, the removal of these symptoms by purgatives, & other remedies directed to the alimentary canal, the extreme tenderness felt in the regions of the stomach & liver, the obstinate constipation attending at this period, in the peculiarity of the stools, indicating extreme vitiation of the biliary secretion, & the phanomena exhibited on dissection, showing the previous existence of no slight disease in most of the abdominal contents, & especially in the stomach & liver, & sometimes none at all in the brain.

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Mr Abernethy examined a child who was supposed to have died of Hydrocephalus, accompanied by great disorder of the stomach, & bowels. In this case the bowels were inflamed, the liver sound, & the brain perfectly healthy in appearance; yet there had been so great a diminution of sensation & motion, as to leave no doubt of the existence of hydrocephalus. Dr Cheyne in his dissections has found the intestines inflamed, & constricted from spasm, & the surface of the liver of a bright red colour abounding in minute vessels, & sometimes extensively adhering to the peritoneum, & in several dissections the surface of the liver studed with small white tubercles, not larger than a grain of mustard, & the glands of the mesentery diseased, evinced by their enlargement, & the caseous depositions which we find in the substance of the glands, & in another place he says I have found in the liver the remains of great inflammatory action & also proofs that undue irritation had existed in the alimentary canal.

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from sympathy between the brain & digestive organs, & when from a primary affection of the brain. Perhaps future observation may prove, says Dr Cheyne, that we shall not be wrong to trace the disease to that organ, which first has its functions sensibly impaired; in a great many cases it has happened to me, that a series of diseased actions has commenced with the disordered state of the abdominal viscera.

The pathology of insanity does not appear to have been investigated, with sufficient attention. The ancients considered a redundency of vitiated bile, as the cause of this disease, & their plan of cure, consisted in the administration of the drastic purgatives. For many centuries this theory of the disease, & the practice in treating it, remained nearly stationary, when the disease came to be considered as an idiopathic affection of the brain, & remedies calculated to act more immediately upon that organ, were employed. This practice however proved exceedingly unsuccessful, indeed it has been observed

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that the farther we have deviated from the rules laid down by the ancients for the treatment of insanity, the more unsuccessful has been the practice. Led by this fact as well as by the observation that the morbid appearances of the brain in persons who have died of insanity, were by no means commensurate to the violence of the disease, & that sometimes none whatever existed, & that great lesions & derangements have been discovered in the brains of persons after death, in whom nothing to excite a suspicion of organic disease had been detected while living, & also that similar appearances have been remarked in the crania of persons who have died of other, & opposite diseases, Pathologists have been ~~led~~ induced to seek in the chylopoietic viscera for the cause of the disease. The result of this investigation seems most incontestibly to prove that frequently in mania & almost always in Melancholia & Hypochondriasis the brain is only sympathetically affected from disorder of the digestive

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Nearly allied to Hypochondriasis, & by many considered as the same disease is Hysteria. Like most of the neuroses, various opinions have been entertained, respecting its pathology. To me however it appears evident, from its history, symptoms, & method of cure, that it is a disease originating in disorder of the abdominal viscera, & in this opinion, I am supported by some of the most respectable authorities. Dr Hamilton after relating the history of the disease, remarks, these symptoms undoubtedly must denote a preternatural affection of the stomach, & alimentary canal. In my opinion, they afford conclusive evidence, that this affection is primary, & that the other multiferous symptoms of Hysteria depend upon it. I have therefore, he adds thought it reasonable to attend particularly to the state of the stomach, & intestines, & to employ in the first place purgative medicines, to remove the constipation of the body which most commonly prevails in hysteria. This treatment of hysteria has pro-

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* Aretaeus appears to have entertained a somewhat similar view of the pathology of the case. Venum praecipue furoris et melancholiae sedes viscera sunt. Aretaei de causis et signis lib 1 cap vi.

Ad. Whytt remarks that a disordered state of the stomach & intestines with wind or noxious humours lodged in them, will sometimes so affect the brain as to deprive people of their reason. Highmore ascribes hypochondriasis to a vitiated constitution of the stomach, & Etmuller has written a dissertation to prove that its seat is in the intestines especially that part of the colon wh lies in the left hypochondriac region. Mandeville ascribes it to a disordered chylification. Junkerius makes its causa proxima to consist in an obstruction of the blood of the vena portarum & viscera connected with it. Boerhaave derives it from an atrabiliary humour lodging in the pancreas, spleen & neighbouring organs; Hoffman from a vitiated peristaltic action of the stomach & intestines.

ved very successful. To this point we have also the testimony of Campee, who says that the dreadful hysterical symptoms, which we daily see either in individual parts, or the whole body are allogether dependent upon the accumulation of acrid matters in the primæ viæ; for the intolerable pain, the scantiness, unnatural appearance of the faces, always warn us of an approaching paroxism of rigors & convulsions.

Epilepsy also, is sometimes produced from the brain sympathizing with the digestive organs. That this is the case is shown by various circumstances in the history of the disease. In the first place it has been proved that Epilepsy may take place, & even terminate fatally, without any morbid alteration of structure of the brain or its membranes. Mr Cooper examined the brain of a person who died of the disease, with particular attention, but could not discover any morbid alteration of structure. Of course it cannot always arise from a derangement in the structure of the brain. It has

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~~Another~~ moreover been observed by Dr Fothergill, that fits were most liable to return in the plenitude of health; that epileptics were often extremely incautious with respect to diet; that children highly indulged, were liable to the disease; that in every other period of juvenescence, & in middle aged adults, if they were at all subject to the disease, it was when they had either committed some excesses, or by one means or other were plethoric; & that in habits subject to epilepsy, the disease seldom occurred, without an habitual indulgence in eating, or a neglect of necessary exercise. In young boys, he adds I apprehend, the epilepsy most generally proceeds from their own craving appetites, & the neglect of those who are about them.

There is also another variety of Epilepsy, that comes on with symptoms similar to those of marasmus, & like it ~~are~~ is produced by a disorder of the abdominal viscera. For this we have the authority of Dr Hamilton whose very extensive experience, & correct observations, entitle his opinion to the

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Dr Ferriar had a patient who at the first attack of a rheumatic fever, was affected with epileptic fits to which he had never been formerly subject. Suspecting that they were occasioned by the stimulus of accumulated bile, he ordered a vomit, which brought off a large quantity of green bile, & relieved him entirely from the convulsions.

These facts to which many more might be added, appear sufficient to prove, that epilepsy frequently arises from sympathy with disorder of the digestive organs; and these I suspect constitute the only curable cases of the disease.

Tic douloureux is produced by the same cause as is proved by the immediate relief afforded by an emetic*. Mr Abernethy also remarks that in the cases of this disease which have fallen under his observation, there was great disorder of the digestive organs, & that he has known cases resembling tic douloureux, cured by correcting the unhealthy state of these organs.

Without entering into further particulars enough has

+ This method of curing the disease was first proposed by Dr. Physic. It is one of the many improvements in the cure of disease, for which mankind are indebted to the ample resources, of his fertile, & truly great mind.

surely been said to prove the intimate sympathy between the digestive organs, & nervous system, & its influence in the production of disease, & to show how important it is in all diseases of the nervous system, to attend to the correction of the disorder of these organs. It may be proper further to remark, that in all these cases, no real disease seems at first to exist in the parts sympathetically affected, it being a disease of function, rather than of structure; but that after the disease has continued for some time, an actual derangement of structure is sometimes produced.

There is a remarkable sympathy between the stomach & organs of sight. Lommius mentions in his observationes medicinales, that disorder of the stomach will sometimes occasion dimness of sight. Whytt says he knew one lady to whom every object appeared as if covered with a thick smoke, as often as her stomach was loaded with an acid, & another who seldom had any disorder of the stomach, without the eye lids, or eyes becoming in some measure inflamed. Dr Chapman

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met with a case of total blindness from disorder of the stomach, & I have myself twice suffered a partial loss of vision from the same cause. That Ophthalmia may be produced by disorder of the digestive organs, we have the authority of Richter, & Mr Dewar says that Egypt, Ophthalmia & bowel complaints alternate frequently with each other. Dr Chapman has met with several cases of very violent ophthalmia, that he could trace directly to a vitiated state of the stomach, & the success of the practice deduced from this ~~view~~ theory of the disease confirms its correctness.

Disorders of the digestive organs, by sympathy affect the Muscular System, producing a variety of diseases, the first of which I shall notice, is gout. There is no disease concerning the nature of which more difference of opinion has existed, or to explain the phenomena of which more ingenious theories have been framed. But all enquiries respecting the nature of disease are idle, & those who have indulged in them, have greatly mistaken the extent of the insight, that we are capable of obtaining, into the

Mr Desgenettes in histoire medicinale de l'armée d'orient mentions the same circumstance.

the operations of the animal oeconomy. They are as futile as the speculations of the Cartesians respecting the absence of gravitation, & have as little to do with the advancement of true medical knowledge. Aretaeus one of the most sensible of the greek writers is the only one I believe who passes over the proximate or essential cause of gout, a knowledge of which he assigns to the Gods alone, the evident causes always are apparent to men. I shall not therefore attempt to investigate the nature & cause of ~~gout the~~ phanomena of gout, but will only remark, that after a careful, & attentive perusal of its history, I feel persuaded that it is a disease originating in disorder of the digestive organs, & attacking other parts, by the sympathy which these parts have with the digestive organs.* Every part of its history appears to me to confirm this view of the pathology of the disease. It was little known among the ancients in the time of their primitive simplicity, but as soon as the Roman manners were corrupted, it became extremely general, even the women were often attacked with it, ob varii generis debacchationes Seneca. It is occasioned by

+ Dr Darwin says that Gout except when it attacks the liver or stomach is always a secondary disease.

by those causes which produce a disordered state of the digestive organs, it can be cured, only by those remedies, which correct disorder in these organs, it alternates[+] & is associated[||], with diseases which most undoubtedly are of gastric origin, & it is always preceded & accompanied with a disordered state of these organs. These facts are sufficient to show its gastric origin, & the sudden manner in which it attacks a part, & the rapidity with which it changes its situation can only be accounted for by means of sympathy.

Disorder of the chylopoietic viscera may also produce in the muscular system, weakness, tremors, & palsy, or the contrary affections of spasm & convulsions.[++] Several cases of these are related by Mr Abernethy. General convulsions particularly in children, arise from this cause. In them indeed it has been said, that convulsions are not to be considered so much a disease themselves, as the indication of disease in the bowels, or other parts.[+++] Hildanus mentions violent convulsions being produced by a pin sticking in the coats of the stomach, & we know

‖ Such as Hypochondriasis, Hysteria &c. Musgrave relates numerous cases of these terminated by the development of Gout. Dr Fenwick mentions a case when it was associated with hysteria.

§ This so uniformly occurs that Messrs Guilbert & Hallé the intelligent authors of the Dictionaire des Sciences Medicale have asserted it to be the best diagnostic symptom of Gout.

++ Abernethy.

+++ Med. Ob. et Inq. vol iij page 292.

that worms very often produce them.
That Chorea St. Viti, is occasioned by disorder of the alimentary canal, is almost universaly admitted. Even Tetanus is sometimes produced by this cause. Dr Chapman has seen it produced by ascarides, & also by a collection of cherry stones in the rectum. And there is one variety of tetanus, the risus sardonicus, which is most undoubtedly caused by noxious matters in the alimentary canal. –

The digestive organs exercise an extensive influence also over the respiratory system. The intimate sympathy existing between these two systems, does not appear to have attracted much attention, until very lately. Bonetus it is true mentions a violent coughing, being produced by a button which had been swallowed, & a case is recorded by Percival in which the same effects resulted from swallowing a nutmeg. In both these cases the cough ceased immediately, upon the evacuation of these substances. A case of Pleurisy caused by worms in the alimentary canal is related by Morgagni, the

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he refers to a paper by Pedratto, in which some cases of Pleuritis are recorded, which were most unequivocaly produced by the same cause. It appears from that paper, that all who vomited the worms recovered, while those who did not died. All the common means of treatment ~~failed~~, in pneumonia failed, anthelmintics alone were successful, while the expulsion of worms from the primæ viæ immediately removed the disease.

Within a few years however it has been proved that even pulmonary consumption itself, may be produced, by the lungs sympathising with disorders of the digestive organs. Mr Abernethy has published a very interesting case of this nature. He has also examined the bodies of several patients who apparently died of Phthisis combined with diseases of the digestive organs, the asserts that in all these cases, both the history & dissection tended to prove, that the chylopoietic viscera were the seat of the greatest & most established disease, & that the pulmonary affection was a secondary disorder. Dr Wilson Philip has also published a very interesting

paper

The credit of first noticing this species of consumption is I believe due to Dr Chapman, who has so much advanced our knowledge of the pathology of diseases.

paper on this species of consumption in the Medico Chirurgical Transactions.*

Asthma is sometimes produced by the lungs morbidly sympathising with the chylopoietic viscera. Faithhorn mentions a case of this kind, & Dr Stone asserts that paroxisms of Asthma frequently recur from faults in digestion. Dr Bree also in his excellent treatise on this disease remarks, that convulsive asthma may be caused by irritation in some one of the abdominal viscera, but particularly in the stomach, & the great relief that is sometimes obtained from vomiting or purging would seem to prove the correctness of this observation.

In the Secretory System the only disease I shall mention is Diabetes. This disease was originally considered to be a local affection of the urinary organs. Dissections however generaly showed these organs to be but slightly diseased, & sometimes not at all affected. This induced pathologists to look elsewhere for the primary seat of the disease, & Dr Meade having always found in his dissections of person who had died of this disease,

+ ? that it is only by confirming the correctness of these doctrines

steatomatous tumours in the liver, considered it as very nearly allied to jaundice. Subsequent dissections however have shown, that these appearances in the liver, are by no means a constant occurrence, & consequently the incorrectness of this theory of the disease.

The merit of ~~having~~ first suggesting a theory, which although imperfect, approximates perhaps, nearer to a rational & probable view of the disease than any other that had been previously entertained, appears due to Dr Stone. Were I to give a theory, says he to explain the nature & symptoms of this wonderful disease, I would say that it arises from a defect ~~of~~ the animal, or assimilatory process, by which the aliment is converted into the nature of our body. Cullen has adopted a similar opinion respecting the nature of diabetes, & Dr Rollo subsequently took it up & attempted to reduce it to a more definite form. In doing so, he has confirmed the fact of its originating in the abdominal viscera, but his theory is so intimately connected with the doctrines of the humoral pathologists, that its truth can be established. For my part I consider

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+ It is not improbable says Mr Abernethy that disorders of the digestive organs by causing the frequent secretion of unnatural urine may produce irritation & subsequent disease of the kidneys.

+ Dr Johnson

it to be a disease originating in disorder of the digestive organs, & that the kidneys are affected by morbidly sympathizing with these organs. That this is the case ~~is shown by the~~ seems probable, from the intimate sympathy which we know exists between these parts, from the disease in these organs preceding the urinary characteristics of the disease, a disorder of these organs materially different from that which is symptomatic of a primary affection of the kidneys, always accompanying the disease; & dissections having shown no morbid condition of the kidneys, but what may be referred to a continuance of increased action in them.

The intimate sympathy between the digestive organs, & the Cutaneous System, has long been observed & acknowledged; but its effects have by no means been sufficiently attended to by practioners. In a most extensive class of diseases, says a late writer, whose treatment has been hitherto very puzzling, the stomach, in company with the liver & intestines, sympathizes to an extent that is little imagined. I mean the variety of cuta-

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mous & eruptive complaints. From the mildest to the most inveterate of these, there is scarcely one which is not more or less connected with derangements of the above mentioned organs, & consequently under the control or influence of remedies directed to them. Indeed this connection or sympathy has not escaped even vulgar observation, since rashes & eruptions on the skin, are (with great truth) every day ascribed to peculiar kinds of food, & drink disagreeing with the stomach. Pustules about the lips almost invariably depend on irregularities in digestion, & the nettle rash is often ~~brought on by~~ produced by indigestible food, indeed in almost every case it may be traced to the presence of some offensive matter taken into the stomach. Dr Bateman says that modifications of the febrile nettle rash are produced by certain articles of food, which in certain constitutions, are offensive to the stomach, & that the operation of these substances is sometimes instantaneous. Galen observes that a general itching of the skin frequently arises from causes within the body, since those are particularly liable to it, who live on food of a bad quality,

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& who labour under indigestion from overcharging the stomach &c. Erysipelas also arises from the skin sympathizing with the digestive organs. That erysipelas is intimately connected with the state of the digestive organs, says Dr Wilson, is clearly demonstrated, by the well known fact of its appearing in various degrees on the skin, in consequence of certain kinds of food, as shell fish, for instance & nut-kernels, as well as other articles, having been taken into the stomach, & this not only in too short a space of time after, to admit of the chyle impregnated by them to be taken into the circulation, but while they as yet remained in the stomach; & of the inflammation disappearing, as soon as these contents were thrown off.

But I should far exceed my limits were I to attempt to point out the various cutaneous affections, & the extent of the influence exercised by the digestive organs in each of them. Some very interesting remarks on this subject are to be found interspersed through the works of Bateman & Willan on cutaneous diseases, & the general

fact

+ See Med. Facts & obs. vol v

fact is fully ~~established~~ corroborated by the experience of Dr. Abernethy who by correcting the state of the digestive organs has been very successful in removing the more evident, but consequent disease of the skin. Nor can it have escaped the observation of every the most superficial observer, that many of these complaints are preceded by disorder of the digestive organs, that great ~~irritation~~ gastric uneasiness is felt on the recession of these eruptions, which is immediately relieved on its reappearance; & that several, Urticaria particularly, may be directly traced to certain articles taken into the stomach, such as shell fish & particularly muscles &c. Dr Winterbotton is subject to this affection after eating sweet almonds, & what is somewhat remarkable, he ~~observes~~ takes them, he observes when blanched with impunity. Dr Heberden had a patient in whom valerian produced it.

The actions of the Circulatory System, are frequently disordered from sympathy with the digestive organs. That palpitations & feeble intermitting actions take place from sympathy with the stomach is

proved

+ Abernethy

moved by their ceasing when the state of this organ becomes changed. The palpitations which take place after eating, in cases when the heart is irritable further evince the sympathy which exists between these organs. So violent are sometimes the palpitations which are produced by sympathy with disorder of the stomach, that they have been sometimes supposed to denote the existence of aneurism.

Sympathy with the digestive organs will also produce in the circulatory system those phanomena which constitute fever. This indeed appears to me, to be the cause of all those fevers which have been denominated idiopathic. The term idiopathic, as applied to fevers is an exceedingly incorrect one, all fevers being symptomatic, that is produced by some local impression affecting the blood vessels by sympathy.
This is universaly admitted as respects fevers arising from wounds & other injuries; it must also be admitted of those caused by the introduction of virus into the system, & by the action of poisons, as arsenic, & opium &c, & by attentively tracing the phanomena of idiopa-

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The cause of these fevers arises either from exhalations from the surface of the earth, or emanations from diseased animal bodies. That these exhalations enter the system by the mouth, & first act upon the stomach, & that the other parts of the system are affected by sympathy with this organ, we have as strong evidence as the nature of the case will admit. That this is the fact is inferred from what is generally observed among persons who are exposed to the influence of concentrated marsh exhalations, or the vitiated air of sick apartments. The atmosphere of swamps, in which the causes of fever abounds in excess, rarely fails to produce, says Dr Jackson, disagreeable sensations in the stomach, disagreeable taste in the mouth, accompanied with a desire to spit out something that is offensive. This sensation is so strong & unequivocal in some persons, that if blindfolded, they could instantly tell when they entered the circle of noxious swamp air, or came within the sphere of an infected sick apartment. The sensations which are

* Different persons have described this sensation differently. Some have felt a sharp taste in the mouth, as blue vitriol were disolving in it, but which no washing, or gargling could remove, others have compared the first impression to that of an earthy exhalation from a newly opened grave, the sensation extending down to the stomach, sometimes exciting instantaneous sickness & shivering.

are always disagreeable, are often such as arise from a nauseous unpleasant pepper acting on the fauces, & stomach. The signs of the local action are often visible in the ~~mucous~~ mucous membrane which lines the fauces; the sensation is felt strongly at the upper orifice of the stomach, & in such cases the effect is removed, & the progress of the disease arrested by the operation of an emetic or strong purgative, eliminating the cause from its first lodgment. That the stomach is deeply implicated in these fevers, is confirmed by the experience of every one. This is so much the case that the different appearances of the tongue ~~in fevers~~ (which we know is the most infallible criterion of the state of the stomach) is adopted by Dr Fordyce to ascertain ~~the~~ in fevers state of the ~~stomach~~ disease, its nature, & the proper mode of treating it, better than the pulse itself, & Dr Percival who has written with such ability on Typhus fever adds, in truth the information afforded by the tongue, to an experienced practitioner, is at once so various & accurate, as to claim his primary attention

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liance. No part of the system however, can be very considerably disordered, without occasioning a correspondent derangement of the whole constitution, the digestive organs being disordered by the action of these causes, the other parts of the system become involved by sympathy with them ~~organs~~, & the phanomena which constitute fever are thus produced.

From these remarks it will be perceived, that I consider fever as a disease of the whole system, rather than of the blood-vessels particularly; caused by an impression made upon some part, & affecting the whole system by the universal sympathy which exists between its parts, causing in each greater or less derangement according to circumstances. These views of fever might be further supported by a variety of considerations, but my limits will not permit my entering into further details. So much however has been already written on fevers, while our progress to a correct knowledge of them has been so very slow, that even the few remarks I have made, are not offered without the greatest diffidence.

This

+ Dr Johnson has seen three cases of gastritis induced by ~~cold~~ sudden cold applied to the surface of the body.

This concludes all the remarks, my limits will per-
it me to make respecting disease of other parts produced
sympathy with disorder of the digestive organs. Many
her diseases might have been ~~added~~ mentioned &
uch interesting matter added, but enough perhaps
s been done, to show the vast importance of the subject,
to abler pens I resign its further illucidation.

To finish the plan of this essay, some remarks
u yet to be made on diseases produced by sympa-
y, from primary impressions made upon the skin &
ain, which I shall endevour to compress in as few
ords as possible. The most important organs of the
ody, particularly, the lungs, alimentary canal, &
ver sympathise with the skin. Cold applied to the
~~kin~~ feet will produce inflammation of the pleura, of
e fauces, of the stomach &c, & a very common cause
bowel complaints is cold applied to the surface.
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ases which have been traced to disorder of those organs.

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~~A very light wound of the skin we every one knows, will sometimes produce tetan~~

As intimately connected with the subject, some remarks should here be made on what have been called delusive sympathies, & on Translation & repulsion of diseases, but my limits have been already too far extended, to permit my entering upon such disquisitions.

A very slight wound of the skin every one knows, will sometimes produce tetanus.

The effects on the system produced by primary affections of the brain has attracted so largely the attention of medical men, that I shall omit saying any thing on the subject. +

These remarks conclude the investigation I proposed making. It has been my wish (on a subject that has been too little attended to) to bring together facts which have hitherto been scattered over a wide surface, & to strengthen the conclusions they have led me too, by the opinions of the best writers. How I have succeeded in the short space of time I have been able to devote to the undertaking others must decide, but it is not without the greatest diffidence as to the merits of the essay, that I submit it to the candour of the medical faculty —

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